

MAYTIME IN MARLOW

A Story by Booth Tarkington—Lu Allen Gained a Reputation for Brain Work by Going Out of Town When Maud and Bill Were a Little Upset on Account of Moving to a New Place

UPON the third Saturday of last May one idea possessed the minds and governed the actions of all the better bachelors of Marlow and all the widowers, better and worse.

She was the first seen on the main street side of the square at about 9 o'clock in the morning. Mr. Rolfo Williams, whose hardware establishment occupies a corner, caught a glimpse of her through a window. His clerk was only a little ahead of him in reaching the sidewalk.

"My goodness, George!" Mr. Williams murmured, "who is that?"

"Couldn't be from a bit more'n half a mile this side o' New York," said George, marveling. "Look at the sunrise."

The lady was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

HALF an hour later Mortimer Fole was busy drifting about the square exchanging comment with other shirt-sleeved gossips.

He dropped into E. J. Fuller's (E. J. Fuller & Co., furniture, carpets and wall-paper).

"Listed here, Ed," said Mortimer.

"What'd she do when she went into Charlie Murdoch's and bought a paper o' pins? She went in there and spoke right to Charlie. 'How are you Mr. Murdoch?' she says. Charlie like to fell over backwards! And then, when he got the pins wrapped up, she says, 'How's your wife, Mr. Murdoch?'

"Where's she supposed to be now?" Mr. Fuller inquired, not referring to Mrs. Murdoch. "Over at the hotel."

"None," Mortimer replied. "Right now she's went upstairs in the Gaffield block to Lu Allen's office."

Mr. Fuller at once came out from behind his counter.

"Where goin', Ed?" Mortimer inquired.

"Out," Mr. Fuller replied.

"I'll go with you," said the sociable Mortimer. "Where'd you say you was goin', Ed?"

"Business," Mr. Fuller replied crossly.

"That suits me, Ed. I kind o' want to see Lu Allen, myself."

Thereupon they set forth across the square, but when they obtained a fair view of the Gaffield block, they paused. She of their quest was disappearing into the warm obscurity of Pawpaw street, and beside her sauntered Mr. Lucius Brutus Allen, attorney-at-law. In the deep, congenial shade of the maple trees her parasol was unnecessary, and Lu Allen dangled it from her hand.

Mr. Williams stood upon the corner with his wife, and P. Borodino Thompson. "That's Lu Allen's lady-walk," said Rolfo, as E. J. Fuller and Mortimer joined them. "He always kind o' says when he goes out walkin' with the girls. Sags to-ward 'em. Looks to me like he's just about fixin' to lean on her."

"Don't yo worry," his wife said testily. "Lucy'd slip him in a minute! She always was that kind of a girl."

"Lucy!" Mortimer echoed. "Lucy who."

"Lucy Cope."

"What on earth are you talkin' about, Miz Williams? That ain't Lucy Cope!"

Mrs. Williams laughed. "Just why ain't it?" she asked satirically. "I expect some o' the men in this town better go get the eye-doctor to take a look at 'em! Especially—she gave her husband a compassionate glance—especially the fat, old ones! Mrs. Cal Burns come past my house 'while ago,' says, 'Miz' Williams, Lucy Cope. Ricketts is back in town,' she says, 'and none the men reckanized her yet,' she says, 'and you better go up to the square and take a look for yourself how they're behavin'!"

"Well, sir," Mr. Williams declared. "I couldn't hardly of believed it, but it certainly is her."

* * * *

M. FULLER intervened in search of information. He was not a native, and had been a citizen of Marlow a little less than four years. "Did you say this lady was one of the Ricketts family, Mrs. Williams?" he inquired.

"No. She married a Ricketts. She's a Cope; she's all there is left of the Copes. Her and Tom Ricketts got married ten years ago and went to live in California. He's been dead three-four years maybe and she's come back to live in the Copes' old house. Everybody knew she was comin' some time this spring. If you want to know why the men never took any interest up to this morning in Lucy Cope Ricketts' goin' to come back and live here again, it's because all they ever remembered her she was kind of a peacock girl; sort of thin, and never seemed to have much complexion to speak of."

"How it's happen Lu Allen's so thick with Mrs. Ricketts?" E. J. Fuller inquired. "How's it come that he—"

"He's her lawyer," Mrs. Williams informed him, "and he was executor of the Cope will, and all. Besides that, he used to be awfully attentive to her, and nobody was hardly certain which she was goin' to take, Lu Allen or Tom Ricketts, right up to a year or two before she got married. Looks like Lu was goin' to get a second chance, and money thrown in!"

"Well, sir," Mr. Williams declared. "I've got to know her, too, but I never ex-

pected she was going to turn out like that."

Meanwhile, in the sun-checked shadow of a honeysuckle vine beside an old doorway, Mr. Lucius Brutus Allen was taking leave of his lovely friend.

"Will you come this evening, Lu, and help me decide on some remodeling for the house?" she asked.

"No, thanks," said Mr. Allen. "I never could decide which I thought your voice was like, Lucy; a harp or a violin. Doesn't make any difference what you say, whenever you speak a person can't help thinking of wild roses shaking the dew off of 'em in the breeze, that blow along about sunrise."

Mrs. Ricketts looked at him steadily. "When will you come and help me with the plans?" she asked.

"I don't know," Mr. Allen returned absently; and he added with immediate enthusiasm: "I never in my life saw any girl whose hair made such a lovely shape to her head as yours, Lucy! It's the one thing in the world without any fault at all—the only thing just perfect—except your nose and maybe the Farthenon when it was new."

That brought a laugh from her, and Lu Allen grew rosy. "By George!" he said. "To hear you laugh again!"

"You always did make me laugh, Lu."

"Especially if I had anything the matter with me," he said. "If I had a headache or tooth ache I'd always come around to get you to laugh. Sometimes if the pain was pretty bad it wouldn't go away till you laughed two or three times."

She laughed the more; then she sighed. "Over ten years, almost eleven—and you saying things like this to every girl and woman you met, all the time!"

"Well," Mr. Allen said, thoughtfully, "nobody takes much notice what a chunky kind of man with a reddish head and getting a little bald says. It's quite a privilege."

* * * *

SHE laughed again, and sighed again. "Do you remember how we used to sit out here in the evenings under the trees, Lu?" One of the things I've often thought about since then was how, when you were here, papa and mamma would bring their chairs and join us, and you'd talk about the moon, and astronomy and the hundred years' war, and—"

"Yes!" Lu Allen interrupted ruefully. "And then some other young fellow would turn up—some slim, dark-haired Orlando—and I'd be talking astronomy with the old folks, but you and Orlando were strolling under the stars—and didn't care what they were made of!"

"No," she said. "I mean what I've thought about was that papa and mamma never joined us unless you were here. It took me a long while to understand that, Lu; but finally I did. Do the girls and boys still sit out in the yards in the evenings, Lu?"

"They're set forth across the square, but when they obtained a fair view of the Gaffield block, they paused. She of their quest was disappearing into the warm obscurity of Pawpaw street, and beside her sauntered Mr. Lucius Brutus Allen, attorney-at-law. In the deep, congenial shade of the maple trees her parasol was unnecessary, and Lu Allen dangled it from her hand."

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness, George!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.

Not pausing in her light stride forward, she looked back over her shoulder, and her remarkable eyes twinkled with recognition. She nodded twice—first, unmistakably to Mr. Williams, and then, with equal distinctness, to George.

These dumbfounded men were no more flustered than was old Mr. Newton Truscom (clother, hatter and gent's furnisher), just emerging from his place of business next door; for Mr. Truscom was likewise sunnily greeted.

"My goodness!" Mr. Williams gasped. "I never saw her from Adam."

"Look!" said Mr. Truscom. "She's goin' in Milo Carter's drug store. Sody-water, I shouldn't wonder!"

* * * *

Lu Allen was but thirty or forty feet away, and the murmur of the two voices attracted her attention.